1; Anonymous U-4 (no date)1938 RB1 Baltic States/61

B. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL

INTRODUCTION

THE three Baltic States cover an area of rather more than 65,000 /33 square miles, and are thus slightly larger than England and Wales. The country is for the most part flat, and rarely rises much more than seven or eight hundred feet above sea-level, except in the so-called Lithuanian heights in the south-east of Lithuania. For the most part, also, the soil is of glacial origin, consisting partly of sand, mixtures of sand and clay, sometimes very fertile, and pure clay, which is often waterlogged. There are thus numerous marshes, heaths, bogs, and lakes. The three States lie roughly between latitudes 54° and 60° N., but the continental nature of the country renders the winters long and hard; there is a comparatively heavy snowfall, and even the large rivers such as the Nemunas (Niemen), the Daugava (Dvina), and the Lielupe (Aa) become frozen. Much of the country, especially where the soil is sandy, is covered with timber. Few mineral deposits except the shale of Estonia are yet of any commercial importance.

The total population of the three States is just over 5½ million.[1] /61 The density is greatest in Lithuania; that of Latvia and Estonia is /63 only just over half that of Lithuania. Lithuania, also, has by far the largest excess of births over deaths, though in all three countries the excess of births has tended to decline since the years immediately after the War. Lithuania, however, still has, after Poland, the highest birth-rate in Northern Europe. Yet in none of the three countries is there any great concentration of the population, and only three towns have a population of more than 100,000, namely the capital cities Riga (385,000), Tallinn (140,000), and Kaunas (105,000).[2] But /62 though there are few large towns, the proportion of the population /33 dependent on agriculture varies considerably. Of the persons gainfully occupied in Lithuania nearly 77 per cent. are engaged in agriculture, whereas the figure for Latvia is 66 per cent., and that for Estonia only 60 per cent.

[1] For population and vital statistics see Appendix I.

[2] The population of the other principal towns according to the latest figures is as follows:

Tartu	59,000	Siauliai	24,000
Liepāja	57,000	Narva	24,000
Daugavpils	45,000	Panevezys	21,000
Memel	38,000	Pārnu	21,000
Jelgava	34,000	Ventspils	16,000

Cf. Great Yarmouth 56,769, Gravesend 35,490, Canterbury 24,450.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1938 RB1 Baltic States RB2

APPENDIX I

POPULATION

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1. *Population, Area, and Density*

	Estonia	*Latvia*	*Lithuania*
Date of census	1.3.34	12.2.35	1.1.36*
Population	1,126,000	1,951,000	2,527,000
Area (square miles)	18,353	25,395	21,489
Density (inhabitants per square mile)	61	77	118

* Official estimate only.

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2. *Vital Statistics*

	Annual birth-rate per 1,000 inhabitants	*Annual death-rate per 1,000 inhabitants*	*Annual excess of births per 1,000 inhabitants*
Estonia:			
1921–5 average	19·6	15·5	4·1
1926–30 „	17·6	16·5	1·1
1931–5 „	16·5	14·9	1·6
1936	16·1	15·6	0·5
Latvia:			
1921–5 average	22·1	14·8	7·3
1926–30 „	20·7	14·8	5·9
1931–5 „	18·3	13·9	4·4
1936	18·1	14·1	4·0
Lithuania:			
1922–5 average	28·3	16·4	11·9
1926–30 „	28·1	16·2	11·9
1931–5 „	25·4	14·6	10·8
1936	24·1	13·3	10·8

3. *Occupations*

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(Numbers employed in various occupations expressed as a percentage of those gainfully occupied.)

	Estonia (1934)	*Latvia (1930)*	*Lithuania (1936)*
Agriculture	60·2	66·2	76·7
Industry	17·8	13·5	6·4
Commerce	5·1	5·2	2·5
Transport	3·5	3·3	1·1
Other (public and domestic service, liberal professions, &c.)	13·4	11·8	13·3
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0

21₃ Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union
Baltic Countries RB1

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over 100 Polish schools. The survival of even a small Polish minority in Lithuania will make it possible for Polish nationalists to maintain their traditional claim on the city of Vilna.

The number of Jews in the Baltic States was also drastically reduced, but in their case the Germans, not the Soviet Government, were chiefly responsible. Many thousands of Baltic Jews were exterminated by the Germans because the Soviet authorities had failed to evacuate them in time.

From a narrow-minded, nationalistic point of view the Baltic peoples might perhaps have welcomed at one stage the disappearance of national minorities, which until 1939 had lived in their midst. In the event they discovered that the departure of Swedes, Poles, Germans and Jews was hardly to their advantage since it only made room for Russian colonists.

SOVIET ESTONIA

Of the three Baltic peoples the Estonians are in the greatest danger of falling victim to the Russian advance. This is due mainly to the fact that the Estonians are fewer in number than either Latvians or Lithuanians. Their numerical inferiority is aggravated by the fact that their natural increase is lower than that of the majority of Western European peoples. In 1938 the rate of natural increase in Estonia was 1·7 per 1,000 inhabitants, which was the lowest of all European countries with the exception of France, and, on account of the Civil War, Spain. In 1940 the situation in Estonia deteriorated to such an extent that a decline of 0·6 per 1,000 was recorded.

In Latvia the position in regard to the population increase is slightly better than in Estonia, its index being at 4·9 in 1938, and 3·7 in 1940. Both Estonians and Latvians are peoples with a Western European birth-rate living in Eastern Europe and they will undoubtedly suffer from all the inconveniences inherent in such an anomaly, in the first place from the pressure exercised by the population of the Soviet Russian Empire whose rate of increase was 17·8 in 1938.

The Russian pressure will become particularly active and real in the case of Estonia because of the close proximity of that country to Leningrad. Leningrad, with a population of over 3,000,000, must inevitably extend its grip over the whole of Estonia with its 1,000,000 inhabitants, and Estonia will then be degraded to a kind of economic annexe of the second largest Soviet city. The construction of a gas pipe-line linking the gas-works of Kokhtla-Järve in Eastern Estonia with Leningrad is an indication that such a development is well under way. Kokhtla-Järve, a new Estonian town which was built during the first post-war Five-Year Plan, is the 'centre of the Estonian Donbass' and is expected to become the largest shale-producing centre in the U.S.S.R.

The development of the new shale mines, shale-refining plants, electric